

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. **(Currently amended)** A distribution system for recording a copy of compressed audio content using variable-length encoding onto a recording medium and supplying the content to a playback apparatus, said distribution system comprising:

a distribution server operable to distribute the content via a network;

a first receiving apparatus operable to receive the content via the network, said first receiving apparatus comprising

a first receiving unit operable to receive, via the network, a data set including the content and control information controlling copying of the content onto the recording medium, and to hold the received data set; and

a recording unit operable to generate authorization information showing whether moving the data set to another receiving apparatus is permitted, and to record the content onto a distribution medium together with corresponding usage rule information including (1) the authorization information, and (2) the control information included in the data set; and

a second receiving apparatus operable to receive the content via the network, said second receiving apparatus comprising

a second receiving unit operable to receive the data set from said distribution server via the network, and to hold the received data set,

a data set moving unit operable to read authorization information from the distribution medium, and (a) to move the data set from the distribution medium to the inside of said second receiving apparatus, and (b) to hold the data set, only when the read authorization information shows that moving the data set is permitted, and

a check-out unit operable to perform check-out when the data set is held by one of said second receiving unit and said data set moving unit, to perform the check-out based on the control information in the held data set by generating a copy of the content included in the held data set and recording the copy onto the recording medium, the copy recorded onto the recording medium being supplied to the playback apparatus,

wherein said recording unit is further operable to record, into a rule management file provided in the distribution medium, the content as a plurality of contents together with corresponding plurality of contents usage rule information,

wherein the entirety of at least one of the plurality of contents is contained in a single object file, and at least one of the plurality of contents is divided to be contained in a plurality of object files,

wherein each object file has an assigned serial number that uniquely identifies the object file,

wherein the rule management file contains a plurality of rule entries that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein each rule entry has a same serial number as a serial number of a corresponding object file,

wherein a rule entry that corresponds to the object file containing the entirety of the content includes corresponding usage rule information and a content identifier for the content,

wherein each of a plurality of rule entries that corresponds to an object file containing a part of the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, includes a content identifier for the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, and one of the plurality of the rule entries includes corresponding usage rule information,

wherein the distribution medium has recorded thereon pieces of track information that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein the track information includes a time search table that shows a plurality of read addresses specifying data located in a corresponding object file at predetermined time intervals, and

wherein each part of the divided content has such a length that a corresponding time search table includes at most a predetermined number of read addresses.

2. **(Previously Presented)** The distribution system of Claim 1,

wherein the control information indicates a number of remaining check-outs,

wherein said check-out unit includes a connecting unit operable to connect to a recording medium, and is operable to record a copy of the content included in the data set

held by said data set moving unit onto the recording medium when a copy of the held content is not already recorded on the connected recording medium, and the number of remaining check-outs shown by the control information held by one of said second receiving unit and said data set moving unit is at least one, and

wherein the second receiving apparatus further comprises

a check-in unit operable to delete, when a copy of the content is already recorded on the connected recording medium, the copy of the content recorded on the connected recording medium, and

an updating unit operable to update the control information of the held content by decrementing the number of remaining check-outs when a copy of the held content is newly recorded on the recording medium, and incrementing the number of remaining check-outs when the copy of the held content is deleted from the recording medium.

3. **(Previously Presented)** The distribution system of Claim 2,

wherein the recording medium has an assigned unique recording medium identifier,

wherein said check-out unit includes

an allocation unit operable to allocate a unique content identifier to the held content, the unique content identifier being recorded onto the recording medium with the content when check-out is performed, and

a storage unit operable to read the unique recording medium identifier for the recording medium connected to said connecting unit from the recording medium, and to store the read unique recording medium identifier as a pair with the allocated unique content identifier, and

wherein said check-in unit includes

a read unit operable to read, when a copy of the content has already been recorded on a recording medium connected to said connecting unit, the unique identifiers for the connected recording medium and the content,

a comparing unit operable to compare the pair of identifiers read by said read unit with the pair of identifiers stored by said storage unit to determine whether the copy

recorded on the connected recording medium was previously produced by said second recording apparatus, and

a holding unit operable to read, when the copy was previously produced by said second recording apparatus, the copy from the connected recording medium, to hold the read copy, and then to delete the copy from the recording medium.

4. **(Previously Presented)** The distribution system of Claim 3, wherein, when the authorization information recorded on the distribution medium shows that moving a corresponding data set is not permitted, said reading unit is not operable to read the content and the usage rule information, and

wherein the playback apparatus plays back the corresponding content directly from the distribution medium, when the authorization information indicates that moving a corresponding data set is not permitted.

5. **(Currently Amended)** A semiconductor memory card used as a distribution medium in a distribution system, the distribution system including a distribution server for distributing a compressed audio content using variable-length coding via a network, a first receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the network and recording the content onto a distribution medium, a second receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the distribution medium and recording a copy of the content onto a recording medium, and a playback apparatus for receiving the copy of the content via the recording medium and playing back the received content, said semiconductor memory card comprising:

a volume area, in which the content and usage rule information are recorded, the usage rule information including control information controlling copying of the recorded content onto the recording medium, and authorization information showing whether moving the control information and the content to the second receiving apparatus is permitted,

wherein the content comprises a plurality of contents that are recorded onto the semiconductor memory card together with corresponding plurality of contents usage rule

information, the usage rule information being contained in a rule management file that is provided in the semiconductor memory card,

wherein the entirety of at least one of the plurality of contents is contained in a single object file, and at least one of the plurality of contents is divided so as to be contained in a plurality of object files,

wherein each object file has an assigned serial number that uniquely identifies the object file,

wherein the rule management file contains a plurality of rule entries that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein each rule entry has a same serial number as a serial number of a corresponding object file,

wherein a rule entry that corresponds to the object file containing the entirety of the content includes corresponding usage rule information and a content identifier for the content,

wherein each of a plurality of rule entries that corresponds to an object file containing a part of the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, includes a content identifier for the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, and one of the plurality of the rule entries includes corresponding usage rule information,

wherein the semiconductor memory card has recorded thereon pieces of track information that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein the track information includes a time search table that shows a plurality of read addresses specifying data located in a corresponding object file at predetermined time intervals, and

wherein each part of the divided content has such a length that a corresponding time search table includes at most a predetermined number of read addresses.

6. **(Previously Presented)** The semiconductor memory card of Claim 5,

wherein each of the plurality of contents includes encrypted audio data and a corresponding encryption key used to encrypt the encrypted audio data,

wherein said volume area includes

a user data area that stores (1) the object file containing entirety of encrypted audio data included in a corresponding content and (2) the plurality of object files each containing a part of encrypted audio data, the part of encrypted audio data together constitute entirety of encrypted audio data included in a corresponding content, and that can be accessed by a device connected to the semiconductor memory card regardless of whether the authenticity of the device has been recognized, and

a protected area that stores the rule management file containing the usage rule information and the encryption keys and that can only be accessed by a device connected to the semiconductor memory card when the authenticity of the device has been recognized, and

wherein the track information shows an attribute indicating whether the encrypted audio data in a corresponding object file constitutes an entire track, a start part of a track, a middle part of a track, or an end part of a track.

7. **(Previously Presented)** The semiconductor card of Claim 5, wherein the authorization information shows that moving a corresponding content and control information is permitted by indicating a number of permitted moves.

8. **(Currently amended)** A first receiving apparatus in a distribution system, the distribution system including a distribution server for distributing a compressed audio content using variable-length coding via a network, said first receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the network and recording the content onto a distribution medium, a second receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the distribution medium and recording a copy of the content onto a recording medium, and a playback apparatus for receiving the copy of the content via the recording medium and playing back the received content, said first receiving apparatus comprising:

a first receiving unit operable to receive via the network a data set including the content and control information controlling copying of the content onto the recording medium, and to hold the received data set; and

a recording unit operable to generate authorization information showing whether moving the data set to another receiving apparatus is permitted, and to record the content

onto a distribution medium together with corresponding usage rule information including (1) the authorization information, and (2) the control information included in the data set,

wherein the content comprises a plurality of contents that are recorded onto the distribution medium together with corresponding plurality of contents usage rule information, the usage rule information being contained in a rule management file that is provided in the distribution medium,

wherein the entirety of at least one of the plurality of contents is contained in a single object file, and at least one of the plurality of contents is divided so as to be contained in a plurality of object files,

wherein each object file has an assigned serial number that uniquely identifies the object file,

wherein the rule management file contains a plurality of rule entries that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein each rule entry has a same serial number as a serial number of a corresponding object file,

wherein a rule entry that corresponds to the object file containing the entirety of the content includes corresponding usage rule information and a content identifier for the content,

wherein each of a plurality of rule entries that corresponds to an object file containing a part of the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, includes a content identifier for the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, and one of the plurality of the rule entries includes corresponding usage rule information,

wherein the distribution medium has recorded thereon pieces of track information that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein the track information includes a time search table that shows a plurality of read addresses specifying data located in a corresponding object file at predetermined time intervals, and

wherein each part of the divided content has such a length that a corresponding time search table includes at most a predetermined number of read addresses.

9. **(Currently amended)** A receiving apparatus for receiving contents from a distribution server via a network, as well as receiving contents via a distribution medium, and recording copies of a received content onto a recording medium, the distribution medium storing contents and corresponding usage rule information, and the usage rule information including control information controlling copying of a recorded content onto the recording medium, and authorization information showing whether moving a data set including a paired content and control information to the receiving apparatus is permitted, said receiving apparatus comprising:

a receiving unit operable to receive the data set from the distribution server via the network, and to hold the received data set;

a data set moving unit operable to read authorization information from the distribution medium, and (a) to move the data set from the distribution medium to the inside of the second receiving apparatus, and (b) to hold the data set, only when the read authorization information shows that moving the data set is permitted; and

a check-out unit operable to perform check-out when the data set is held by one of the second receiving unit and the data set moving unit, the performed check-out is based on the control information in the held data set by generating a copy of the content included in the held data set and recording the copy onto the recording medium, the copy recorded onto the recording medium being supplied to the playback apparatus,

wherein the content comprises a plurality of contents that are recorded onto the distribution medium together with corresponding plurality of contents usage rule information, the usage rule information being contained in a rule management file that is provided in the distribution medium,

wherein the entirety of at least one of the plurality of contents is contained in a single object file, and at least one of the plurality of contents is divided so as to be contained in a plurality of object files,

wherein each object file has an assigned serial number that uniquely identifies the object file,

wherein the rule management file contains a plurality of rule entries that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein each rule entry has a same serial number as a serial number of a corresponding object file,

wherein a rule entry that corresponds to the object file containing the entirety of the content includes corresponding usage rule information and a content identifier for the content,

wherein each of a plurality of rule entries that corresponds to an object file containing a part of the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, includes a content identifier for the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, and one of the plurality of the rule entries includes corresponding usage rule information,

wherein the distribution medium has recorded thereon pieces of track information that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein the track information includes a time search table that shows a plurality of read addresses specifying data located in a corresponding object file at predetermined time intervals, and

wherein each part of the divided content has such a length that a corresponding time search table includes at most a predetermined number of read addresses, and

wherein the contents are compressed audio contents using variable-length coding.

10. **(Currently amended)** A recording medium having recorded thereon, a computer-readable program capable of instructing a computer to perform processing as a first receiving apparatus in a distribution system, the distribution system including a distribution server for distributing a compressed audio content using variable-length coding via a network, a first receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the network and recording the content onto a distribution medium, a second receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the distribution medium and recording a copy of the content onto a recording medium, and a playback apparatus for receiving the copy of the content via the recording medium and playing back the received content, said computer-readable program being capable of instructing a computer to:

receive via the network a data set including the content and control information controlling copying of the content onto the recording medium, and hold the received data set; and

generate authorization information showing whether moving the data set to another receiving apparatus is permitted, and record the content onto a distribution medium together with corresponding usage rule information including (1) the authorization information, and (2) the control information included in the data set,

wherein the content comprises a plurality of contents that are recorded onto the distribution medium together with corresponding plurality of contents usage rule information, the usage rule information being contained in a rule management file that is provided in the distribution medium,

wherein the entirety of at least one of the plurality of contents is contained in a single object file, and at least one of the plurality of contents is divided so as to be contained in a plurality of object files,

wherein each object file has an assigned serial number that uniquely identifies the object file,

wherein the rule management file contains a plurality of rule entries that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein each rule entry has a same serial number as a serial number of a corresponding object file,

wherein a rule entry that corresponds to the object file containing the entirety of the content includes corresponding usage rule information and a content identifier for the content,

wherein each of a plurality of rule entries that corresponds to an object file containing a part of the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, includes a content identifier for the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, and one of the plurality of the rule entries includes corresponding usage rule information,

wherein the distribution medium has recorded thereon pieces of track information that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein the track information includes a time search table that shows a plurality of read addresses specifying data located in a corresponding object file at predetermined time intervals, and

wherein each part of the divided content has such a length that a corresponding time search table includes at most a predetermined number of read addresses.

11. **(Currently amended)** A recording medium having recorded thereon, a computer-readable program capable of instructing a computer to perform processing as a receiving apparatus for receiving contents from a distribution server via the network, as well as receiving contents via a distribution medium, and recording copies of a received content onto a recording medium, the distribution medium storing contents and corresponding usage rule information, the usage rule information including control information controlling copying of a recorded content onto the recording medium, and authorization information showing whether moving a data set including a paired content and control information to the receiving apparatus is permitted, said computer-readable program being capable of instructing the computer to:

receive the data set from the distribution server via the network, and hold the received data set;

read authorization information from the distribution medium, and (a) move the data set from the distribution medium to the inside of said computer, and (b) hold the data set, only when the read authorization information shows that moving the data set is permitted; and

perform check-out when the data set is held by said receiving and said reading, moving and holding, the check-out being performed based on the control information in the held data set by generating a copy of the content included in the held data set and recording the copy onto the recording medium, the copy recorded onto the recording medium being supplied to a playback apparatus,

wherein the content comprises a plurality of contents that are recorded onto the distribution medium together with corresponding plurality of contents usage rule information, the usage rule information being contained in a rule management file that is provided in the distribution medium,

wherein the entirety of at least one of the plurality of contents is contained in a single object file, and at least one of the plurality of contents is divided so as to be contained in a plurality of object files,

wherein each object file has an assigned serial number that uniquely identifies the object file,

wherein the rule management file contains a plurality of rule entries that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein each rule entry has a same serial number as a serial number of a corresponding object file,

wherein a rule entry that corresponds to the object file containing the entirety of the content includes corresponding usage rule information and a content identifier for the content,

wherein each of a plurality of rule entries that corresponds to an object file containing a part of the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, includes a content identifier for the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, and one of the plurality of the rule entries includes corresponding usage rule information,

wherein the distribution medium has recorded thereon pieces of track information that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein the track information includes a time search table that shows a plurality of read addresses specifying data located in a corresponding object file at predetermined time intervals, and

wherein each part of the divided content has such a length that a corresponding time search table includes at most a predetermined number of read addresses, and

wherein the contents are compressed audio contents using variable-length coding.

12. **(Currently amended)** A receiving method performed by a first receiving apparatus in a distribution system, the distribution system including a distribution server for distributing a compressed audio content using variable-length coding via a network, the first receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the network and recording the content onto a distribution medium, a second receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the distribution medium and recording a copy of the content onto a recording medium, and a playback apparatus for receiving the copy of the content via the recording medium and playing back the received content, said receiving method comprising:

receiving, via network, a data set including the content and control information controlling copying of the content onto the recording medium, and holding the received data set; and

generating authorization information showing whether moving the data set to another receiving apparatus is permitted, and recording the content onto a distribution medium together with corresponding usage rule information including (1) the authorization information, and (2) the control information included in the data set,

wherein the content comprises a plurality of contents that are recorded onto the distribution medium together with corresponding plurality of contents usage rule information, the usage rule information being contained in a rule management file that is provided in the distribution medium,

wherein the entirety of at least one of the plurality of contents is contained in a single object file, and at least one of the plurality of contents is divided so as to be contained in a plurality of object files,

wherein each object file has an assigned serial number that uniquely identifies the object file,

wherein the rule management file contains a plurality of rule entries that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein each rule entry has a same serial number as a serial number of a corresponding object file,

wherein a rule entry that corresponds to the object file containing the entirety of the content includes corresponding usage rule information and a content identifier for the content,

wherein each of a plurality of rule entries that corresponds to an object file containing a part of the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, includes a content identifier for the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, and one of the plurality of the rule entries includes corresponding usage rule information,

wherein the distribution medium has recorded thereon pieces of track information that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein the track information includes a time search table that shows a plurality of read addresses specifying data located in a corresponding object file at predetermined time intervals, and

wherein each part of the divided content has such a length that a corresponding time search table includes at most a predetermined number of read addresses.

13. **(Currently amended)** A receiving method for recording a computer-readable program for receiving contents from a distribution server via the network, as well as receiving contents via a distribution medium, and recording copies of a received content onto a recording medium, the distribution medium storing contents and corresponding usage rule information, the usage rule information including control information controlling copying of a recorded content onto the recording medium, and authorization information showing whether moving a data set including a paired content and control information to the receiving apparatus is permitted, said receiving method comprising:

receiving the data set from the distribution server via the network, and holding the received data set;

reading authorization information from the distribution medium, and (a) moving the data set from the distribution medium to the inside of the second receiving apparatus, and (b) holding the data set, only when the read authorization information shows that moving the data set is permitted; and

performing check-out when the data set is held by one of said receiving and said reading, moving and holding, the check-out being performed based on the control information in the held data set by generating a copy of the content included in the held data set and recording the copy onto the recording medium, the copy recorded onto the recording medium being supplied to a playback apparatus,

wherein the content comprises a plurality of contents that are recorded onto the distribution medium together with corresponding plurality of contents usage rule information, the usage rule information being contained in a rule management file that is provided in the distribution medium,

wherein the entirety of at least one of the plurality of contents is contained in a single object file, and at least one of the plurality of contents is divided so as to be contained in a plurality of object files,

wherein each object file has an assigned serial number that uniquely identifies the object file,

wherein the rule management file contains a plurality of rule entries that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein each rule entry has a same serial number as a serial number of a corresponding object file,

wherein a rule entry that corresponds to the object file containing the entirety of the content includes corresponding usage rule information and a content identifier for the content,

wherein each of a plurality of rule entries that corresponds to an object file containing a part of the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, includes a content identifier for the at least one of the plurality of contents, which is divided, and one of the plurality of the rule entries includes corresponding usage rule information,

wherein the distribution medium has recorded thereon pieces of track information that are in one-to-one correspondence with the object files,

wherein the track information includes a time search table that shows a plurality of read addresses specifying data located in a corresponding object file at predetermined time intervals, and

wherein each part of the divided content has such a length that a corresponding time search table includes at most a predetermined number of read addresses-, and

wherein the contents are compressed audio contents using variable-length coding.